

Remarks:

1. The Examiner requires restriction of the current prosecution to one of the following groups of claims: Group I (claims 1-25 and 32-36) or Group II (claims 26-31).

Applicant affirms the earlier oral election to prosecute the claims of Group II: claims 26-31.

5. Claims 26-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 5,890,276.

During a telephonic interview, the undersigned attorney discussed the '276 patent and potential claim amendments with Ex. Weeks and Ex. Smith. Although no agreement was reached, the undersigned attorney thanks Examiners Weeks and Smith for their cooperation and help.

Applicant respectfully submits that the subject matter of amended claims 26 and 27 and original claims 28-31 is novel, non-obvious, and therefore patentably distinct over the disclosure of the '276 patent. The '276 patent does not disclose or suggest the subject matter of claims 26-31. Consequently, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

As applicant has traversed the rejection made by the Examiner, it is respectfully requested that the stated rejection be withdrawn, claims 26-31 be allowed, and the present application be passed onto issuance. No fee is believed due with the present application. In the event a fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 50-3381.

Respectfully submitted,

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